



CHAIRMAN  
COLUMBIA ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION BOARD  
2900 SOUTH QUINCY STREET, ARLINGTON, VA 22206

Ser CAIB/290  
26 Aug 03

Dear Mr. O'Keefe

On behalf of the 13 members of the Columbia Accident Investigation Board, I present Volume One of the final report concerning the loss of the Space Shuttle *Columbia*. This document is at the same time the last step in the investigation and the first critical step in our return to flight. The Board feels that the depth and breadth of this investigation has been unprecedented in NASA history; but the Board also expresses its deep regret regarding the accident that put this investigation in motion.

The Board is grateful for the continued support of the Administration, Congress, NASA, and the public during this arduous investigation process. Without it, we would not have been able to delve as deeply into the causes of the tragic loss of *Columbia* and its crew of seven explorers.

The Board intends for the report to stimulate debate on the future of this nation's exploration of space and to further provide a context for the difficult decisions to be made during this very important debate.

Respectfully

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "H. W. Lehman", is written over a horizontal line.

H. W. LEHMAN  
Admiral, U.S. Navy (Retired)  
Chairman  
Columbia Accident Investigation Board

The Honorable Sean O'Keefe  
Administrator  
National Aeronautics and Space Administration  
Washington, DC 20546-0001